Annexation Update

At City Council's Jan. 13 meeting, council members will consider adopting a resolution of intent to begin the annexation process of six unincorporated areas around the city. The "resolution of intent" is the first step in a detailed process required by state statutes in the annexation process. The item on City Council's Jan. 13 agenda does not ask council members to annex the proposed properties during the Jan. 13 meeting but initiates the formal portion of the annexation process, provides direction to city staff to further study the areas being considered and establishes dates for upcoming public meetings. Staff will present their findings to City Council on Jan. 27 in a report detailing the extension of city services into proposed areas. If City Council approves the Jan. 27 plan, the report and accompanying maps be available for review and/or duplication in the City Clerk's office.

Upon City Council's approval on Jan. 27, city staff will mail notice of the next two steps in the annexation process to all property owners in the proposed areas: the public information meeting and public hearing. At the public information meeting, scheduled for March 4, staff will explain the plan for services and be available to answer questions. The public hearing, scheduled for March 23, will provide affected residents and property owners the opportunity to address City Council about annexation. City staff will also present an explanation of the services report at the public hearing.

Following the public hearing, at a separate meeting, City Council will consider adopting ordinances to annex the proposed areas and determine when these areas will be brought into the city.

Although the six areas proposed for annexation go through annexation process simultaneously, each area is considered separately, and individual areas may be reduced in size or eliminated during the process. Proposed areas may not be increased in size, and additional areas cannot be considered once City Council starts the process with its resolutions of intent.

For further questions on the City's annexation process please contact the Asheville Planning and Development Department at (828) 259-5830.

In order to qualify for annexation, an area must meet several specific requirements set forth in the State statutes:

First: an area must be adjacent to Asheville's city limits, at least one-eighth of the external area's boundary must coincide with the city's boundary and the area can't already be within the boundary of an incorporated municipality.

Second, in order for an area to qualify for annexation, it must have certain urban development characteristics. An area qualifies if it meets one or more of several development standards, summarized below:

(1) the area has a population of at least 2.3 persons per acre; or

(2) the area has a population of one person per acre, and is subdivided into parcels such that at least 60% of the total acreage consists of lots three acres or less in size and such that at least 65% of the total number of lots are one acre or less in size; or

(3) the area is developed so that at least 60% of the total number of lots are used for residential, commercial, industrial, institutional or governmental purposes; of the total residential and undeveloped acreage more than 60% consists of lots and tracts three acres or less in size; or

(4) the area is developed such that all lots in the area are used for commercial, industrial, governmental, or institutional purposes.

In general, the requirements are designed to discourage or prevent cities from annexing large tracts of vacant or rural land before they are developed to the stated standards. Under certain conditions, vacant land may be annexed if it is in conjunction with annexation of land meeting the standards above.

Annexation may include areas not developed for urban purposes but that constitute "necessary land connections" between the city and areas that do qualify, or between two areas that qualify. However, these areas can't exceed 25% of the total area to be annexed.